

Practical Christian Living

Lesson 10 - God's Authority

When God created the universe, He established a principle to govern it—the principle of authority. God Himself was the highest authority. Under God were the archangels and under the archangels were many other angels. When man was created, he too was under God's authority.

Authority means the right to rule and the right to be obeyed. All authority belongs to God because He is the Creator of all things. The hosts of heaven worship Him saying,

"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, And by your will they exist and were created." Revelation 4:11

The Rebellion of the Angels

Among the angels which God created was the archangel Lucifer. He was head over all the angels. He was the most beautiful, the most powerful, and the wisest angel ever created.

But a time came when this mighty angel rebelled against his Creator. He was not content with being the highest of all the angels. He wanted to take God's place. He said in his heart,

"I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation...I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." Isaiah 14:13-14

Lucifer's rebellion was against God's authority. He sought to take God's place. As a result of his rebellion, he became Satan, the enemy of God and the enemy of man. One third of the angels of heaven followed Satan in his rebellion against God. These fallen angels are called "*demons*" or "*evil spirits*."

Satan, along with the fallen angels, set up a kingdom opposed to God and His kingdom. Ever since that time, there have been two kingdoms in the universe—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

Prior to Satan's revolt, every created being lived by the **principle of obedience** to God's authority. But Satan introduced another principle, the **principle of rebellion**. Rebellion is a heart attitude toward God which says, "*I will do what I want to do. I will not obey You.*"

The Rebellion of Man

God created the first man, Adam, and placed him in the Garden of Eden. Then God created a wife for Adam. Her name was Eve. God's arrangement was that Eve should be subject to Adam and that Adam should be subject to God Himself.

Satan desired to put his spirit of rebellion into man, but he did not approach Adam first. Instead, he went to Eve and enticed her into disobeying God by eating forbidden fruit. When Adam knew what Eve had done, he too took the forbidden fruit and ate it.

The Bible says that Eve was deceived. But Adam was not deceived. He chose to disobey God. Adam followed Satan in his rebellion against God. He said in his heart, *"I will do what I want to do."*

By the rebellion of Adam, sin entered the world. Adam passed his rebellious nature on to his children and to the whole world. Thereafter, rebellion became a principle in the heart of man. The Bible says, *"We have turned every one to his own way."* (Isaiah 53:6) This is why the Bible refers to unsaved people as *"children of disobedience."*

After the flood, God established laws and ordained human government. He gave men the authority to enforce His laws. God did this for the protection of mankind. People were so sinful and rebellious that, without some form of government, it would not have been possible to control evil.

It was God who instituted capital punishment. He wanted men to see the seriousness of taking another person's life. God told Noah,

"Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed..." Genesis 9:6

The Failure of Israel

Later, God chose Abraham to be the head of a race of people who would be called God's people. God wanted a people who would be obedient to Him in the midst of the rebellious human race.

Abraham is known for his great faith, but he was also a man who obeyed God's authority. God said of Abraham,

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD..." Genesis 18:19

Abraham's descendants became the nation of Israel, God's chosen people. It was God's purpose that His people be obedient to Him and establish His authority on the earth. God intended that, through the nation of Israel, all the people on earth would come to know Him.

But the people of Israel were disobedient and rebellious. God had to chasten them many times. Eventually God allowed their nation to be destroyed because of their continued disobedience. Those who were not killed were taken as slaves and dispersed throughout the world.

The Obedience of the Son

God created angels, and many of them rebelled against Him. He created man, and man rebelled against Him. He chose the nation of Israel to be His people, but the people of Israel rebelled against Him.

Then, in the fulness of time, God sent His Son into the world. We know that the Lord Jesus came to die for our sins, but He also came to reestablish the principle of obedience to God. Jesus said,

"For I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." John 6:38

Jesus Christ is God. Before He came into the world, He shared the same glory and authority as the Father. But when He came into this world, He gave up His place of glory. He humbled Himself to become a man. The Bible says,

"Who, being in the form of God...made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Philippians 2:6-7

What kind of man was Jesus? He was a man who was totally obedient to God. Never once did He disobey God. Never once did He resist God's authority while He was here on earth. The principle of His life was the principle of obedience. Jesus said,

"I always do those things that please Him." (John 8:29)

In the Garden of Gethsemane, as the Lord Jesus thought about bearing our sins on the cross, He prayed, *"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will, but as You will."* (Matthew 26:39) Since it was the Father's will that He die on the cross for our sins, He willingly obeyed His Father.

There has never been a more wonderful sight in the universe than that of the Son of God being obedient unto death. The Bible says,

"And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:8

Because Christ humbled Himself and was obedient unto death, God the Father raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to the very throne of the universe. The Bible says,

"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." Philippians 2:9

This man, Jesus Christ, has been given all authority in Heaven and in earth. He has become the Head of a new race—the children of God. Just as He lived His life by the principle of obedience, so we are to live our life by this same principle.

Two Principles in the World

Let us recognize that today there are these two principles in the world:

- 1 - **The principle of rebellion**, which is the principle of Satan.
- 2 - **The principle of obedience**, which is the principle of Christ.

Every person lives his life by one or the other of these two principles.

1- The basic principle of the world is rebellion.

The Bible speaks of *"the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience."* (Ephesians 2:2) That spirit is the spirit of Satan himself and it manifests itself in rebellion against God and against His Son. This attitude of the world is expressed in Psalm 2:

"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His anointed." Psalm 2:2

This heart attitude of rebellion against God and His authority expresses itself in lawlessness. The Bible says that the world will become more and more lawless as we approach the end of this age.

Many who profess to be Christians have never repented of their sins. They are still living lives by the principle of rebellion and they will not be accepted by Christ. The Lord Jesus said,

"Not every one who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name? And in Your name have cast out devils? And in Your name have done many wonderful works?' And then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you: depart from Me, you who work iniquity (you who are lawless.)'" Matthew 7:21-23

2 - The basic principle of God's children is obedience.

We are here to uphold God's authority. In our unsaved condition we were rebellious and disobedient. But when God saved us, He made it possible for us to live our new life by the **principle of obedience**. The Lord Jesus Christ, the obedient One, now lives in us. The Bible says,

"Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you...?" 2 Corinthians 13:5

Because we have the Lord Jesus living in us, we have the power to obey God. But our obedience is not automatic. It was not automatic in the life of the Lord Jesus. He chose to live His life by the principle of obedience. And we must choose to live our life by the principle of obedience. The Bible says,

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Philippians 2:5

Discovered Gem

As a child of God, I must live my life by the principle of obedience

Questions

1. Define authority.
2. Who does all authority belong to?
3. How did Satan introduced the principle of obedience to God?
4. After the flood, what did God establish and ordain?
5. Is God against capital punishment?

6. How is it that the angels God created rebelled against Him?
7. How is it that Jesus was totally obedient to God.
8. What are the two principles in the world today?
9. Should we ever live by both principles?
10. What is the basic principle of God's children?